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Rep. Gary Miller Cosponsors Bipartisan Bill to Crack Down on Puppy Mills

Washington, D.C. – This week, Representative Gary Miller (CA-31) cosponsored legislation that will crack down on the inhumane treatment of dogs by commercial breeding kennels. If enacted, this legislation will protect pets and pet owners from the poor treatment and horrific conditions inherent to puppy "factories."

The federal Animal Welfare Act mandates that commercial breeders of dogs and other animals bred for commercial resale at pet stores meet basic standards of care and are licensed and regularly inspected. However, thousands of commercial breeders across the country who sell directly to the public are currently exempt from these common-sense regulations.

Reports of overcrowded cages, inbreeding, unsanitary conditions, and lack of access to adequate exercise have been documented at puppy mills across the country. Many families, who purchase animals from these breeders believing them to be healthy, find later that their dogs suffer from an array of health and behavioral problems or harbor genetic diseases that may not surface until years later.

"As a longtime dog owner, it pains me to see the inhumane treatment of animals occurring at unregulated commercial breeding kennels," said Congressman Miller. "Operators of puppy mills are not only endangering the health of the animals, but are actually making money by selling sick dogs to the public. I am proud to cosponsor this important legislation that will crack down on unscrupulous breeders who are putting profit ahead of animal welfare and pet owners."

The Puppy Uniform Protection and Safety (PUPS) Act, introduced by Rep. Jim Gerlach (PA-6th), would require all large commercial breeders to ensure the proper treatment of puppies and older dogs in their care, without affecting responsible small or hobby breeders. Specifically, the bill requires any breeder that sells more than 50 dogs per year to the public – including over the Internet – to be licensed and inspected. The measure would also require that dogs in commercial breeding facilities have appropriate space and 60 minutes of daily exercise.

"Dogs shouldn't be treated like a cash crop," noted Humane Society President and CEO Wayne Pacelle in a recent release. "The federal law regarding the care of dogs at commercial dog-breeding operations needs an overhaul, and this legislation will correct some of the worst gaps and deficiencies in current law."

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